



South Carolina
Department of Transportation



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

SUMMARY REPORT

**Report No. FHWA-SC-03-09
January 2004**

South Carolina
Department of Transportation
955 Park Street
P. O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202

Prime Contractor Prequalification and Performance Evaluation

State departments of transportation utilize varied approaches to evaluating the contractor's capability and capacity to execute work. The approaches typically include prequalification questionnaires and bonding requirements. However, many state departments of transportation have concluded that prequalification questionnaires and bonding requirements alone are not sufficient to protect the department from undesirable project outcomes.

The primary objective of the research documented in this report was to develop a contractor evaluation system for the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) that would be linked to contractor prequalification. The research methodology consisted of an extensive literature review and a symposium that featured a speaker from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The Contractor performance evaluation systems utilized in Kentucky appeared to contain many elements of the system desired by South Carolina, and was therefore used as an initial template for the development of the South Carolina performance evaluation system.

A contractor performance evaluation questionnaire, consisting of 22 questions with associated numerical ratings, was developed to address issues including safety, timely project completion, subcontractor and utility coordination, public relations, work quality, and overall project management. A second evaluation questionnaire was developed to permit the contractors to evaluate the project performance of SCDOT personnel. This questionnaire, consisting of 15 numerical rating questions, addressed issues including quality of plans and specifications, response to contractor requests, dispute resolution, skill of SCDOT personnel, and defective work notifications. .

The report also documents a recommended performance evaluation implementation process that addresses frequency of evaluation submissions, adjustments for multiple projects, project complexity, rating calculations, and an appeal procedure.

Copies of the two evaluation questionnaires, with instructions, are contained in the report appendices.

A pilot implementation project was initiated by SCDOT in January 2004. The pilot project, which will not immediately impact contractor prequalification, will be used to make adjustments to the questionnaire survey questions, explore weighting some performance evaluation questions more than others, and finalize a link between the contractor performance rating and prequalification status.

This research was conducted by Dr. Lansford Bell at Clemson University. For further information, contact Terry Swygert at SCDOT: 803-737-6652; swygerttl@scdot.org.

